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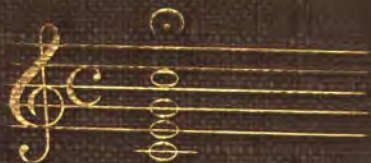
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ON THE  
COMMON CHORDS  
CLIFFORD HARRISON

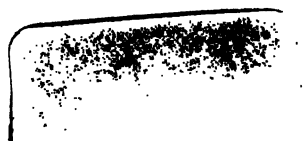


“THE C MAJOR OF THIS LIFE”

*Browning*



M. Peckey.



M. Pedley.



**ON THE COMMON CHORDS.**

**"The C Major of this life."**

**BROWNING. *Abt Vogler.***



# ON THE COMMON CHORDS

VERSES

BY

CLIFFORD HARRISON

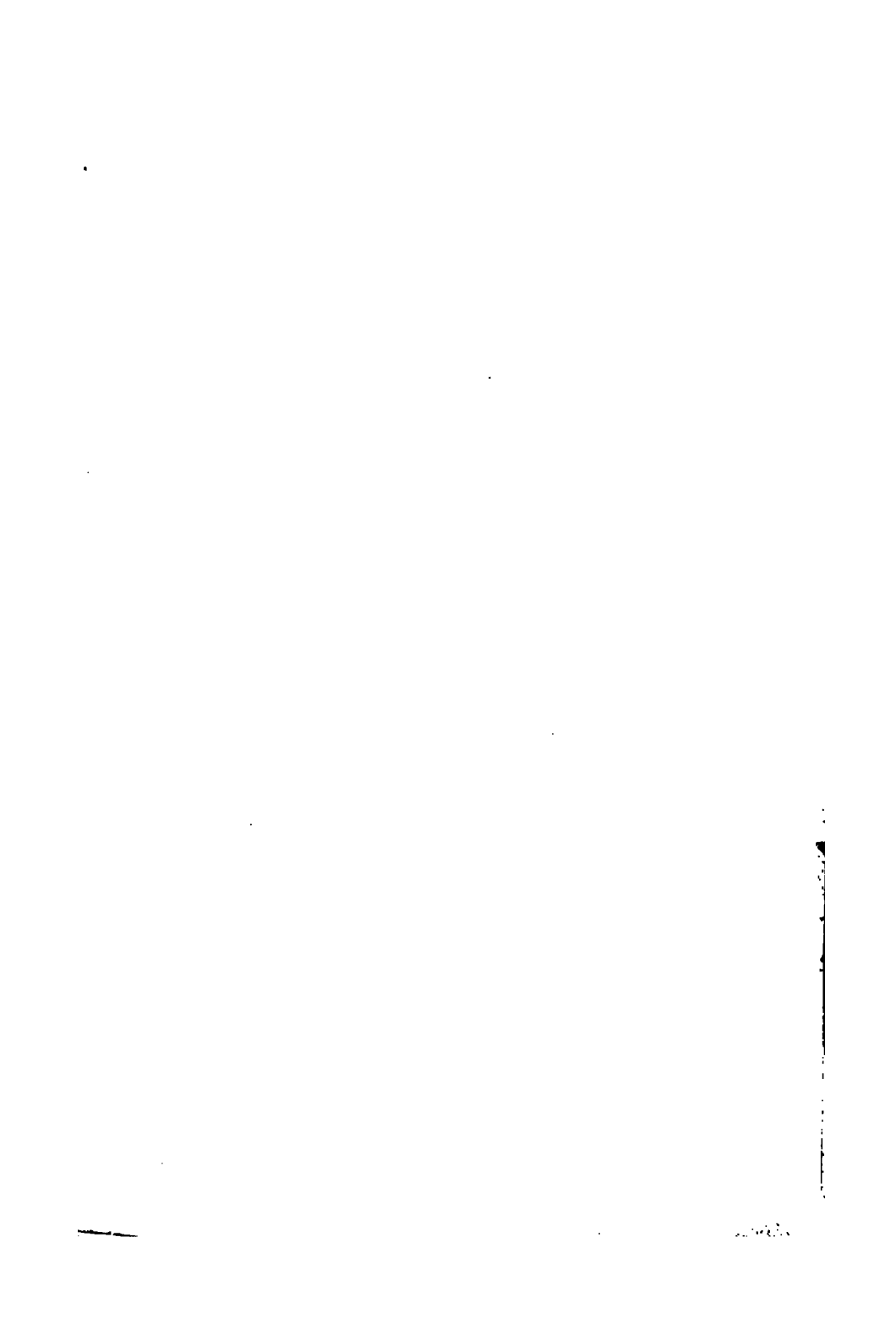
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## Dedication.

TO MY MOTHER.

TEN years have passed since to Your hands I brought  
The book<sup>1</sup> I dedicated unto You,  
And now,—as then,—I write, “in filial thought,”  
The dear inscription on this page anew.

For though You now have passed away from us  
The foretime Dedication still holds good ;  
Nay—gains a new authority : and thus,  
In unseen ways more felt than understood,

Your smile rests on the pages that I bring  
To add to those I brought to You erewhile.  
And life has few beliefs more gladdening  
Than that I still may gain that unseen smile.

<sup>1</sup> “In Hours of Leisure.”

I think with no sad memory or regret,  
No aching sense of loss unsatisfied,  
Upon Your love, but rather find it set,  
Shining and living, at my very side.

Surely in nought is it more truly felt  
Than when I'm happy in my work or play :  
And if at times the love in tears will melt,  
The tears by love are also wiped away.

I never writ a line You did not see.  
Why should I doubt You see what now I write ?  
Across the silence comes Your smile to me.  
The Dedication gains a brighter light.

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## **"THE SONG THAT HAS NO SOUND."**

**"This music of the Song without a sound."**

**Sir EDWIN ARNOLD, "With Sadi in the Garden."**

**GRIEVE not that Beauty dies like summer flowers ;  
That bright thoughts come and go like fleeting showers :  
They do but wander through this life of ours  
To tell us of "the Song that has no Sound."**

**Out of that song they come—all lovely things,—  
Beauty, joy, music, brave imaginings,  
And then pass back again with tired wings  
Into their Home—"the Song that has no Sound."**

**They find a moment's speech in this our air,  
As Heat and Light evolve, to make Earth fair,  
And having touched our souls, they pass to where  
They join again "the Song that has no Sound."**

10      "THE SONG THAT HAS NO SOUND."

Say not to Earth—"Why are you silent thus?"  
Nor to the sky—"You give no sign to us!"  
For both do speak with voice miraculous,  
    If once you hear "the Song that has no Sound."

The rainbow hanging in the fringe of rain,  
The fields that clothe themselves with golden grain,  
The trees that in the springtime bud again,  
    Are music from "the Song that has no Sound."

The waters from the seas and streams updrawn,  
That fall again at sunset and at dawn  
In dew and rain to feed the flower and lawn,  
    They also sing "the Song that has no Sound."

See how all colours lose themselves in Light;  
They still are there though they have fled our sight.  
So Music at a point from us takes flight  
    Into the perfect "Song that has no Sound."

Oh, love of lovers, and all love that lies  
'Twixt souls that on the flame of love arise,  
What are ye but the far-off melodies  
    That reach us from "the Song that has no Sound"?



The noble deed, wrought often all unknown,—  
The suffering borne without complaint or moan,—  
The rash word checked,—the little kindness shown,—  
Are harpstrings to "the Song that has no Sound."

No thought we feel, yet cannot quite express,—  
No momentary wish or willingness  
To make joy purer, or one pain the less,—  
But carries on "the Song that has no Sound."

Glory of morning that has just begun,—  
Pathos of eventide and set of sun,—  
Major and Minor,—all are fused in one,  
For keynote to "the Song that has no Sound."

The calm acceptance of a lowly lot,—  
The greatness that this great world values not,—  
The causes lost—the victories forgot,—  
Are rich chords in "the Song that has no Sound."

The Life that first climbed up from where it fell,—  
The Discord solved,—the curse changed to a spell,—  
Passion transfigured,—these things go to swell  
The triumph of "the Song that has no Sound."

From star-worlds to the stone upon the ground,  
From where Life issues, back to where 'tis crowned,  
For him who has the ears to hear, is found  
The Secret of "the Song that has no Sound."

### A PRAYER.

O ! MOUNTAINS, give me of your strength.  
Above the clouds ye rise  
A huge impact of Titan force.  
I look on you. My eyes  
Draw in strong Thought. That Thought  
In Action realise.

O ! Beauty of the sunlit day,  
Tell me your message true :  
Let your bright ether o'er me flow,  
And wash me through and through ;  
Infuse your meanings into me  
And make me one with you.


O ! Miracle of Nature, wrought  
All round us every day,  
Touch me with wonder more and more :  
To darkness bring the ray  
Whereby to read the open Book  
And find the secret way.

O ! stars unseen, but ever *there*,  
Grant your beneficence :  
Let me lie open to all rays  
Of upward influence,  
Nor fret myself with questioning  
How they may come or whence.

O ! fair and most dear Memories,  
Make Past and Future one  
In all that raises Life to Love :  
And oh ! ye eyes that shone  
With such undying love on me  
Still lead me up and on.

O ! Ache of heart unsatisfied,  
Give me no lower rest  
Than That the dim mind apprehends  
As Highest and as Best :  
Live like a searching melody  
Within me—unexpressed.

O ! shining Footsteps of the Christ,  
Too often hid in gloom,  
Shine out and blossom in the dust :  
Life's mysteries illumine,  
And guide me on—a path of Light—  
In worlds beyond the tomb.



O ! Thoughts of God unspeakable,  
Work in me unto Light :  
Quicken deific impulses ;  
Keep the Shekinah bright,  
Still shining clearer through the veil,  
Till faith gives way to sight.

O ! Name of God Ineffable,  
Undreamt of yet by me,  
Let my soul listen, till it hear  
The far-off Melody ;  
And on the Music of that Word,  
Rise—rise eternally !

## THE BENEDICTION.

ADAPTED FOR RECITATION FROM "LA BÉNÉDICTION," BY  
FRANÇOIS COPPÉE.

IN the year eighteen hundred and nine we took  
Saragossa. I was a sergeant then.

As soon as the town was ours, the men  
Were ordered to enter each street and nook  
And search every house. So in we went.

Close-barred and shuttered at windows and doors,  
(At once we saw that mischief was meant !)

The houses had a treacherous look,  
As if they held part in some deadly plot.  
No lie, For from all the upper floors  
A very hail of bullet and shot  
Fell like a fiery rain of death.

And we whispered bitterly under our breath,  
"This is the work of the priests !" And thus—  
Although we'd been fighting since break of day,  
And the dust had well nigh blinded us,


And our clothes were discoloured with smoke and clay,  
And our lips were burnt with the bitter taste  
Of the cartridges,—when at the end of the street  
We spied some priests escaping in haste,  
We took our aim with a pleasant sense  
Of fit reward and recompense,  
Which made the murderous business sweet,  
And shot them down as you'd shoot down rats—  
Those long black cassocks and great black hats !

My company struck up a narrow lane,  
A sort of alley. I went ahead.  
And as I went, with cautious tread,  
(Hard in the smoke and the dust to see plain !)  
I watched the roofs to left and right ;  
And suddenly in the strip of the sky  
I saw the dull red pulsing light,  
Like the breath of a forge, from the streets hard by  
Where the flames had won the victory ;  
Whilst rising swift and sinister  
Came the sharp shrill shrieks of the massacre.

The road was thickly strewn with the dead.  
We trod on them : no time to pick  
Our way, the bodies lay so thick !  
Well, slowly up the lane we crept,

A sharp look out all round was kept,  
As stopping at every house our men  
Burst open the door, and stooping low,  
As if they were storming a wild beast's den,  
Entered ; and in a minute or so  
Came out again with bayonets red.  
It was horrible work, let it be said.  
And then they'd trace upon the wall  
A sort of grim sign manual,  
A cross, with their crimsoned hands, to show  
That the house was ours. For it's well to know  
In these narrow streets that you leave no foe  
At your back. Still on and up the lane we went.  
Not a bit of a tune to help us on,  
Not a drum tap even,—silent as mutes !  
The officers thoughtful, black brows bent ;  
Veterans anxious, keeping in touch  
At the elbow : and every mother's son  
Sickening—no wonder !—at heart as much  
As if we were boys and raw recruits.

Suddenly at the end of the street  
We heard loud shouts in French for aid ;  
Nothing for it but a rush to gain  
Our friends in peril ! At once we made  
A desperate charge, with answering cheers,




Right through the alley. And there we found  
The men who had called, and the reason why.  
It was a line of grenadiers,  
Who every moment were losing ground,  
Pressed back ignominiously  
From some steps that rose in triple tiers  
To a convent. Twenty monks at least,—  
Black demons with their shaven crowns !—  
Were gathered on the topmost stair.  
White woollen crosses were on their gowns :  
And with their blood-stained arms all bare,  
Their sleeves thrown back, they clustered there,  
Flinging large stones and heavy sticks ;  
Whilst in their midst a half-mad priest  
Beat back the soldiers everywhere,  
With blows from a great gold crucifix.

Bah ! it was tragic !—what a scene !  
We levelled and fired by platoon.  
'Twas done quite coolly : like a machine !  
We were weary and sick, and we seemed a troop  
Of butchers. An executioner  
Would scarce do such work without demur.  
As we fired, we saw the horrible group  
Of heroes,—for such in truth they were !—  
Go down in a writhing heap.

As soon

As the thick smoke cleared, sure enough a mass  
Of bodies lay there : and underneath  
Long lines of blood crept dark and slow  
Along and over the steps. And lo !  
Behind this foreground, grim with death,  
The great church opened out, immense,  
And cool, and dark ; with shadows dense,  
Lit dimly with the rich stained glass.  
On the high altar candles burned.  
And in the chancel, far away,  
Shrined as it were in dusk profound,  
A priest, with long hair silver grey,  
Solemnly toward the altar turned,  
And undisturbed as though no sound  
Had reached him of the outside fray,  
And wars on earth did not exist,  
And death itself were not hard by,  
Was finishing quite tranquilly  
The office of the Eucharist.

Look here ! a bitter blasphemy  
Had grown to be a part of me.  
I was a very heathen—well,  
Give it the right name—infidel.



And in my time . . . there let it be !  
What need to tell you ? only this :—  
No sort of violence came amiss  
To me, the battered man of blood.  
I had no fear of gods or men.  
The very wrinkle on my lip,  
Which wrought an evil line there when  
I smiled, proclaimed my fellowship  
With men who laugh at what is good.  
But this old man who calmly stood  
So tall and white and undismayed,  
Made me—I scarce know how,—afraid !

“ Fire ! ” cried an officer. No doubt  
The priest (I’m sure it was so !)—heard :  
But quietly he stood, without  
A quiver. Not a man had stirred.  
Sudden the old man turned about,  
And faced us with the Sacrament.

It was the point, you’ll understand,  
At which the priest, concluding Mass,  
Turns to the kneeling church, and has  
To bless with an uplifted hand  
The faithful and the penitent.  
His vestments, with his arms outspread,

Looked like great wings. A beam of light  
Happening to fall upon his head,  
The silver whiteness of his hair  
Gleamed like a halo. Standing there  
He held the Monstrance high in air,  
And with it three times made the sign  
Of the cross. His hands were firm as mine.  
He shook no more, I tell you, sirs,  
Than if he stood before a crowd  
Of awed and kneeling worshippers.  
Then, speaking solemnly and slow,  
With that strange chaunt which, as you know,  
Priests always use, he cried aloud,—

“Benedicat vos, omnipotens Deus.”

“Fire!”—again the word of command.  
We watched him still and could not stir;  
When a soldier in our midst—the cur!—  
Took aim and fired. The old man paled.  
But never once his courage failed.  
His eye gleamed brighter and his hand,  
With blessing more beneficent,  
Lifted on high the Sacrament:  
And once again he spake and said,—

“Pater et Filius.”



What anger stirred us I know not :  
What murderous mist, of hatred bred,  
Blinded us, who can say ? A shot  
Crashed forth again. Shame ? You are right.  
A shame !—but still the thing was done.  
The monk a moment bowed his head,  
Whilst we stood breathless, every one.  
Then, lifting up a death-pale face,  
Propping himself as best he might  
Against the altar slab, he tried  
Feebly again in air to trace  
The symbol of the Crucified :  
And in a low voice—every word  
In that deep hush was plainly heard—  
With slowly closing eyes, he said—

“ Et spiritus sanctus ! ”

And at the altar steps fell dead !  
The Monstrance, tumbling to the ground,  
Rebounded three times on the stone,  
And clattered down the steps. No sound  
Was heard. Awe silenced every one ;  
Yes, even us—hard, hardened men !  
A hoarse laugh broke the silence then,  
And a drummer-boy sang out—“ Amen ! ”

I think perhaps since life began  
For me—now near its close !—almost  
The only blessing I can boast,  
In which I've had the smallest share,  
Is this ! And some folks might declare  
That given so, by such a man,  
'Twas less of blessing than of ban.  
But not so meant that priest, I'll swear !

We did our duty. He did his.  
Priests know what soldiers' duty is.  
They too are soldiers. Vive la Guerre !

## THE VALSE.

TEN YEARS AFTER "A FAREWELL."

I HEAR it still—the Valse we heard that night  
When last we met—a long ten years ago.  
In those ten years how much has taken flight !  
But it remains. Unaltered ? Yes and No.

I hear it still. But 'tis with other ears.  
Its pathos deepens, but it has no pain.  
And hearing it across the silent years  
I know the meaning of its rhythmic strain.

The pain that once was as a searching flame  
Died in my heart : and from its burial place  
It rose again with wondrous bridal name,  
And with a smile on its transfigured face.

And you—? I see you as you were, and dream  
All my strange dream of years so long gone past.  
And looking on you, through that Valse, you seem  
To smile as one,—a conqueror to the last.

Yet is the victory yours? No victor I!  
Victorious neither, both defeat endure.  
Yours is an untriumphant victory,  
Mine a defeat that holds investiture.

I do not blame you. Blame? who is to blame?  
There's blame nowhere: we are but as we are.  
Life works up from the crystal to the flame.  
Each has his part and each obeys his star.

It was not you I loved: but it was you  
Who broke the dream wherein I dreamed of Love.  
Who was it that I loved so wildly? who?  
I love Her still. Her name I wot not of.

That valse-tune too—had it not power as well?  
There's something words, I think, may not explain  
In Music. Certain 'tis it holds a spell  
Which makes for joy, but moves toward it thro' pain.

A valse—a valse ! Lightly we think of it,  
But there's the mystery of the fatal Three  
Within its rhythmic pulse ; and thro' it flit  
Strange hints of Hope, Desire, and Destiny.

That mystic time which sounds so cruel-sweet,  
Suggests that dream I dreamt was but a part  
Of what, in speech vibrating incomplete,  
Makes the dumb secret of its Music-heart.

I longed to Hear : and you, you brought the word,  
Not knowing,—and not caring, shall we add ?  
Not greatly ! well, so let it be. I Heard.  
And if perchance less pain I might have had

In taking home the message which you brought,  
Less wonder also in it might have been.  
Mine was the blame, if blame there be in aught.  
You gave me something I might not have seen

Except for you. I give you gratitude  
For that. You smiled at love. Take this instead.  
Let me not speak as one in tragic mood :—  
I dreamed a dream :—there's no more to be said.

Save this :—that valse-tune holds the hidden clue.

There lies the secret—locked ! Love is the key.  
May kinder hands unlock It unto you,  
Than that white hand of yours once was to me.

## THE SILVER BELL.

In times half mythic, when the pathless wild  
    Stretched from the white Alps to the Northern sea ;  
And, pioneered by hermits brave and mild,  
    Came on the Knightly Age of Chivalry,  
With sword whose blade 'gainst mortal foe was keen  
As was its cross-hilt 'gainst all foes unseen ;—

In those far times, in the fair Teuton land,  
    There lived a youthful Prince beloved of all.  
His father ruled with firm benignant hand,  
    Wearing in peace the double coronal  
Of sovereignty that writes its honour true,  
And Age that is a crown of honour too.

The Prince had gained that happy April age  
    When life seems glad to all who truly live,  
And regal in his youth, his heritage,

His beauty, everything combined to give  
Such plenitude of pleasure to his share,  
That joy for him seemed written everywhere.

He saw it in the sunshine and the stars :  
He felt its bright elixir thrill each limb :  
In dark romantic tales of far-off wars,  
In love-songs passionate, in legends dim,  
In boyish game and in the ringing chase,  
He wooed sweet life and kissed its blooming face.

" Father," he cried, " why say you life is sad ?  
I find the world so liberal of delight,  
That though I, like my churls and vassals had  
To toil, I still should find the toiling bright.  
The paths of life are not so harsh and rough.  
Give us but air and sunshine—'tis enough.

" From priest and bookman, warrior, serf and sage  
Rises this wail for happiness that flies,  
As if the greybeards in revenge for age,  
Grudging fair youth its flowers and sunlit skies,  
By gloomy words and frowning brows were bent  
To make the sadness they themselves lament.

"I would that I the whole wide world could tell  
How glad at heart and well content am I !  
I would my voice—like some clear silver bell—  
Could ring my tale of pleasure far and nigh,  
That hearing its joy-message day by day,  
'Our Prince at least is happy !' men might say."

The king gazed fondly at the handsome boy,  
His hand upon the fearless golden head.  
"Were there such bell maybe 'twould not be joy  
Would set it ringing after all," he said.  
"We miscall things, and change with changing years ;  
Joy sometimes lives in negatives and tears.

"But see, my son, we put thy thought to test.  
'Our Prince is happy !' let the people say.  
The silver bell, of which you spoke in jest,  
It shall be cast and hung without delay ;  
That we before we die may hear its voice,  
And with our people in thy joy rejoice !"

The furnace fires were lit ; the silver weighed ;  
Rare alkalies the metals purified ;  
The molten ore the workman's will obeyed ;  
The panting slaves at forge and anvil plied ;  
The Bell was graved with text and symbol meet,  
Till it stood forth in every part complete.

High o'er the tower which formed the city's crown  
The wondrous Silver Bell was duly hung :  
And thence long chains and cords were carried down  
Straight to the Prince's room ; and these were slung  
With such elaborate care and perfect poise,  
The lightest touch would make the Bell give voice.

Nor was this all. The cords that moved the Bell  
Others did move to ring in unison  
In sacred fane and rock-built citadel,  
So that the sound might travel on and on  
To where the limits of the fertile plain  
Touched on the forest's limitless domain.

Thus, through the echoing city far and near  
Melodious peals of answering bells would ring,  
And as the carillon with utterance clear  
Its fearless challenge to the Fates would fling,  
The people were to answer to the spell,  
" Our Prince is happy ! Hark—the Silver Bell ! "

With sumptuous state and solemn ritual  
The Bell was lifted to its aerial home.  
Its purpose was proclaimed with trumpet call ;  
And every eye turned toward the gilded dome,  
Where, in a belfry open to the sky,  
The Bell hung glittering like a star on high.

The courtiers and the people waited long,  
Expectant of the silvery voice. The day  
Sank to the west. Anon the vesper song  
Rose from the Minster ; then the sun's last ray  
Flamed on the city spires, and darkness fell.  
But motionless and silent hung the Bell.

In his own chamber stood the Prince alone,  
His hand upon the silken cord. A light  
Burnt in the brazen lamp. His robe was thrown  
Across the couch ; and through the quiet night  
Came up the splash of fountains, and the sound  
Of watch-drums beating out the midnight round.

"Why should I wait ? What do I wait for ? What ?  
For greater happiness ? That scarce can be.  
My joy was something that I doubted not  
Until my tongue proclaimed its certainty.  
The boast itself suggests the questioning :  
And at a question shy joy spreads her wing."

Irresolute he mused, until at last  
Sleep lulled his questions into quietude.  
And so the one auspicious hour went past  
Wherein he might have made his boasting good.  
The Bell was his ; he might have rung it then.  
That was his chance : it never came again.

For when next day his hand was on the cord,  
And purpose shone forth clearly from his eyes,  
There came a cry, and one rushed in—" My lord !  
The King, your father, calls for you ! He dies !  
Come quickly, and receive his parting breath !"  
He went, and looked for the first time on Death.

The tale foretells itself in clearest speech.

Often the young Prince raised his hand to ring  
The Bell, but ere that eager hand could reach  
The cord, his purpose sank to faltering :  
Or if joy came, alas ! the joy had flown  
Before he fully knew it for his own.

When he was crowned he heard a nation's cheers.

His bosom swelled. Is he not happy now ?  
Yes ; but within his eyes rose bitter tears,  
Thinking whose crown it was that clasped his brow.  
The boy-king and the orphan met in him :—  
The boy's heart laughed—the orphaned eyes were dim.

A war broke out. His helmet led the host.

He swept his foes before him like the wind.  
His name in triumph rang from coast to coast,  
And shouting crowds his homeward pathway lined.  
But whilst the laurel crowned anew his head,  
His friend upon the battlefield lay dead.

Lovely his bride, betrothed from early youth.

“ I will be true as wife and Queen,” she said,

“ But ask not Love. ’Tis best you know the truth.

With one I loved my heart of love is dead.

The people’s good remains : for it I live.

I give you faith, but love I cannot give !”

Yet when the influence of maternal love

Warmed her cold heart to joy in life again,

Her husband’s every look to her did prove

Such tender chivalry that she was fain

To own him worthy of a worthier mate ;

At last he gained her love :—too late ! too late !

He never knew it till the hour was near

When memory of it only could be his,

For she lay dying. In his bended ear

She whispered low, “ I love you !” Then her kiss

Did seal the secret of their two lives fast,

And in that kiss of love her spirit passed.

Let the long years roll by, with changes wrought

By wear and tear and fever of a life

That under all its outward calm was fraught

With penetrating sympathy, and rife

With that same fervid spirit which, as boy,

Made for such very insolence of joy.

At last the man is old and bowed and white,  
His fourscore years are halting to their goal ;  
The world is fast receding from his sight ;  
His face grows wistful with the parting soul.  
And beckoning feebly to those standing by,  
He says, " Bring me the boy before I die ! "

It was his grandson. Handsome, brave, and strong,  
Light of his eyes, hope of the old man's days !  
Tales of his prowess had been told in song,  
And prophecy for him turned into praise.  
" Summon the Prince ! "—the word flies far and wide,  
And the youth hastens to his grandsire's side.

Upon a couch the dying King is lain,  
Even in the castle turret, where, as Prince,  
He used to live. His dimming eyes again  
Look on the scene on which he looked long since,  
A happy-hearted boy ! His faltering hand  
Stretches itself as if to bless the land.

Slowly he gazes round him. Is there not  
A silken cord up yonder ? Yes. Grown old,  
Dusty and frayed ! Ah !—memories forgot  
Crowd on his brain ; a hundred scenes unfold.  
He lifts his hands—they touch the mouldering cord.  
" Father ! " he murmurs, " I recall your word !

"The Silver Bell has not been rung by Joy !

Far liker 'twill be tolled for obsequy."

Even as he speaks, with tear-bright eyes, the boy

Runs in, and with strong arms full tenderly

Doth clasp him, whilst the old face raised to his

Feels the hot tears which consecrate the kiss.

"Father !" he cried, "for so to me thou art,

Since other father I remember none,

I kneel to thee, and from my very heart

Beseech thy blessing. Bless me." "Ah ! my son,—

Who seem'st to me in very truth

An angel born of my remembered youth,—

"I bless thee, and I bid thee take thy throne.

And may the King of kings to your heart give

The will to make His sovereign will your own,

And for the welfare of His people live.

Prophetic light upon my soul doth shine,

The joy my life has missed I find in thine !

"It come upon me in this hour of death,

With light ineffable, and hope divine.

Reach me yon cord. Now, with my latest breath,

Life seems beginning. Clasp my hand in thine,

And give me of thy strength ; for Joy has passed

Away from Self and found its own at last."

And suddenly the Silver Bell on high,  
Rang clear and full, and flung its message wide ;  
And as the King fell back with broken cry,  
The answering peal burst out on every side ;—  
But jangled, harsh,—with cruel discord crossed,—  
Its purpose passed away—its meaning lost !

It was a thing unthought of and forgot ;  
Buried with those who mouldered in the ground.  
Even the young Prince knew the story not,  
And trembled at the unexpected sound.  
Its only answer was his grief-bowed head,  
And this sharp cry of pain—"The King is dead !"

Then, with a trembling voice, an aged man,  
The Abbot of the Minster, straightway told  
The tale. Swift down his cheeks the hot tears ran,  
Remembering all the days and hopes of old,  
As, stooping o'er the white and death-crowned brow,  
He said, "Thank God, the King *is* happy now !"

Then all did kneel, and from the Chapel nigh  
Floated the chant of intercessory prayer.  
And as the echoing bells discordantly  
Died sadly on the hushed and heavy air,  
On every lip the voices twain were wed—  
"The King is happy !" and "The King is dead !"

### A STATEMENT.

I WILL not sing our love, lest singing it  
I mar the living song it sings unsung.  
Love so perfected needs a perfect wit,  
And most imperfect is my witless tongue.

Love,—though old earth have seen its counterpart  
Ten thousand times in every age and shore,—  
Is ever new-born in each living heart,  
A thing of wonder never known before!

And words which are not each and all its own,  
Though they were echoes of the sweetest song  
That ever lover's poesy hath known,  
Would seem such new-born miracle to wrong.

Hence it would take a verse more skilled than mine  
To put in words as fresh as is our love,  
The light that from your life on mine doth shine,  
The faith that needs no song its strength to prove.

So if my tongue hath, all these constant years,  
    Been mute, nor framed a verse, sweet friend, to thee,  
Blame not the heart that with such reason fears,  
    Lest it should sing our love unworthily.

But rather listen to that unheard song  
    Sung in my thought to thee each hour we live ;  
*Its* poetry is sovereign sweet and strong,  
    And yet 'tis all mine own. *That* let me give.

TO B. H.

(IN MEMORIAM HIS SISTER, WHO DIED MAY 23, 1885,  
AGED FIVE YEARS.)

CHILDREN there are so bright and fair  
They seem almost too frail and rare  
For this our heavy earthly air.

They may not long time with us stay,  
Even like Angels—as we say—  
They come to us and pass away.

Yet in their little life's brief span  
They do a work the wisest man  
Were proud to make his wisdom's plan.

For they bring Love which holds no sting,  
And in their bright companioning  
Life half unfolds its closed wing.

The world, made better by their smile,  
Smiles in return, and for awhile  
Forgets its greed and veils its guile.

Such was your little sister. She  
Incarnate music seemed to be—  
A little human melody !

No one could look upon her face  
Or watch her winning little ways  
And feel no stir of answering grace.

The fairest child I ever knew !  
Her hair was silken floss, in hue  
Like ripening corn. Her eyes were blue.

You know the pink convolvulus  
That grows upon the sea shore ? Thus  
Her flower-like face did look to us.

A haloed atmosphere and scent  
Exhaled from her ; and as one bent  
To kiss her, in acknowledgment

Of all she was, one grew aware  
Of some bright aura in the air,  
A something good one longed to share.

Her roseleaf lips would give a kiss  
That spoke of purer worlds than this ;  
Her breath was sweet as new milk is.

So like to you was she that sure  
She seemed your Guardian Angel pure,—  
Yourself in fairy miniature !

And people as they saw you pass  
Would oft look back ; the picture was  
As fair a sight and pretty as

Could well be seen : the little maid  
All in her summer white arrayed  
Holding your hand, demure and staid.

I have a pleasant memory of  
That afternoon whereon we drove  
To Gosleston Pier—a place we love !

She watched with dancing eyes the scene,  
Sitting enthroned us two between,  
A perfect baby Beauty-Queen !

The little child the Holy Book  
Tells us that Jesus blessed and took  
As sign of Heaven, I think did look

Like her. And in her childhood sweet  
Immortal childhood now we greet,  
And hear the lips divine repeat—  
“Of such are the kingdom of God.”

## THE WAY OF IT.

(WRITTEN TO A TUNE.)

LIFE at the best, dear,  
What can we say of it ?  
Be it confessed, dear,  
Dark is the way of it !  
Less is the knowledge  
The more that we know ;  
Deeper the puzzle  
The older we grow :  
Mystery ever !  
Is it not so ?  
Yes, we must own it,  
That is the way of it :  
That is the best, dear,  
The best we can say of it !  
Life is compact  
Of hopes and fears :  
Life is a fusion

Of smiles and tears :—  
Really and truly  
Much what one hears  
Wise people say of it !  
Whether we view it  
With eyes of the seers,  
Or wish to make merely  
A sort of child's play of it.  
Still there is something  
That rings through the years,  
A longing—a question,—  
The which, it appears,  
Sounds more and more  
On our unwilling ears  
Strive as we may  
To get *out* of the way of it.

Ah, but you smile !  
Dismal things may be true,  
But they won't happen, dear,—  
Will they ?—to you !  
Ah ! in our youth  
That is what we all say of it.  
If we but knew !  
If we but knew !  
If we but treasured

Life's tenderest flowers !  
If we but valued it  
    Whilst youth was ours !  
If ! and oh, if !—  
    And if we did this,  
Or if we did that,  
    Or the other did miss,  
Life would be—possibly—  
    Worse than it is !  
Looking at Life  
    In the radiant May of it,  
Little we reck  
    What wise people say of it.

So, if Life be dreary,  
    And sad, and the rest of it,  
Gold of the rainbow  
    Be ever the quest of it,  
What can be done  
    But just make the best of it ?  
Bad is the best,  
    If it's true what they say of it !  
Well, in our hearts  
    This at least we may pray of it,

Let True Love

Light every ray of it !

Then if it prove, dear,

That our love is true,

What will it matter

To me, love, or you,

What wiser folk

May declare is the way of it ?

Let them all speak

Of life as they may of it,

Give us a storm-cloud

To darken each day of it,

*Minus* the rainbow

That lives in the grey of it,

What do we care ?

They have got the wrong lay of it.

They do not love ;

And Love's the mainstay of it !

Since then of Life, dear,

The best we can say of it

Is, it is Mystery,

Make what you may of it ;—

Mystery always,

The more that we see of it,—

Mystery ever,  
And that we agree of it ;—  
Love holds the only  
Possible key of it !

That, I believe,  
Is the best I can say of it.  
Would you know more ?  
Go to Love, then, and pray of it  
That it should teach ye :—  
It will. 'Tis the way of it !

## FIRE.

CIRCLEWISE move the elements,  
The Ancient wisdom saith—  
By death of Air the water lives ;  
Earth by the water's death ;  
Fire from the Earth ; and Air once more  
From Fire doth take the breath.

Eternal Flux thus rules them all.  
Yet, through all change they own  
One primal, final Element  
For which no name is known,  
Even as Man is one, in whom  
A Fourfold state is shown.


For Earth his Body claims, its own :  
Mind as the Air is free :

Unfathomed Water is the Soul,—  
Who knows its mystery ?  
And in the Spirit that aspires  
The flame of Fire we see.

Thus the states rise, and in the Fire  
We find the Logos great  
That makes one living Entity  
Out of the Fourfold state,  
And gives the Mystery of earth,—  
The Man Regenerate.

On every altar Earth has known  
The sacred fires outshine ;  
From every temple Man has built  
Flashes the answering sign :  
And Flame doth symbolise alike  
The Good and the Malign.

And still before our altars burn  
The lamps and tapers fair ;  
The fuming censer still sends up  
Its cloud into the air :  
And Genius, Anger, Love, and Faith,  
The Fiery tincture share.



The Flaming Sword,—the Burning Bush,—  
The bolts of Sinai,—

The Pillar, Cloud and Light in one,—  
The Chariot from the sky,—

The sun-bright photosphere that rings  
The Name of Adonai,—

The baleful fires of Ashtaroth,  
Of Cybele and Bel,—

The reek of torch and brasier,  
Dark with inversive spell,—

The awful signatures of Flame  
We symbolise in “Hell,”—

They all are Kabalistic types  
Of depthless mystery :

Images of the Living Fire,  
Burning eternally,

Awful,—adorable—biune—  
Anguish and Ecstasy.

The Furnace which is martyrdom  
May prove in other wise,

The Son of God's most radiant tryst :  
Point of Ignition lies

In enmity : but love the Flame,  
And lo ! in Love, Fear dies.

**Shine, Spirit ! till your Light become  
My everliving Name !  
Burn, Fire ! until my life is wrought,  
Through all its parts the same !  
O God ! I would aspire to grow  
One with Thine Unseen Flame.**

## BALLADE.

TO THE FÖHN.<sup>1</sup>

A WIND from the South comes up in the night ;  
Over the mountains it sweeps to the lake.  
The darkness is checkered with shadow and light  
As moonbeams the racing stormclouds rake.  
Are not the flowers of Easter at stake ?  
The South Wind knows it, and seems to say,  
“ The Spring is up, and the Earth is awake !  
The snows of the Winter are melting away ! ”

I' the morning, all hail to the gladdening sight !  
As fair a scene as the earth can make !.  
Ah ! 'tis not alone that its Beauty is bright,  
But its sense of Life doth the whole heart take

<sup>1</sup> The Föhn is the south wind, which melts the Alpine snow. There is a Swiss proverb that, “ Unless the Föhn blows, the sun and ‘le bon Dieu’ can do nothing with the snow.”

With a joy so great that the heart doth ache !  
Hark ! water is laughing, which many a day  
Frost has held chained in a prison opaque !  
The snows of the Winter are melting away !

The grasses and flowers, that lie 'neath the white,  
Have moved in the earth : quick song-pulses shake  
The blackbird's throat as he stops in his flight :  
And deep in the drift-covered tangle of brake  
Is born the bud of the first " snowflake."  
And as children remember the flowers of May  
The avalanche thrills with its first heart-quake !  
The snows of the Winter are melting away !

## ENVOI.

O heart ! 'twere a shame if Great Nature spake  
And you answered not. Cry Yea to her Yea !  
And tell her for you too—for Springtime's sake—  
The snows of the Winter are melting away !

## A BALLADE OF BUTTERFLIES.

" Butterflies will some day be valued as one of the most important branches of biological science." — BATES'S " Naturalist on the Amazon."

STRANGE are the truths that Great Science doth teach !

Grave is her utterance, grand is her aim.

Far less inclined to a joke than to preach,

Holds she her mind in a serious frame.

Yet, when to one little fact she came,

Which somewhat her gravity seemed to upset,

She owned it at once—the dignified Dame !—

Science to butterflies owes a great debt !

Pause for a moment or two, I beseech,

Just to consider how trite and how tame

Sounds, after this, the poor moralist's speech

Crying to Butterflies, " Fie !" and " For Shame ! "

Surely the fribbles were scarcely to blame

Were they to answer him back in a pet—

" Rubbish ! we're things of remarkable fame !

Science to butterflies owes a great debt ! "

When—o'er the pink-budding boughs of the peach,—  
Sulphur-wings beat, in the song of "je t'aime !"  
When—high in air, (safe from Science's reach !)—  
Foolish fritilleries flutter like flame,  
Just as if flowers were out for a game !—  
'Tis not alone—(and let us regret  
Good folks so often ignore the same !)—  
*Science* to butterflies owes a great debt.

## ENVOI.

"Emperor," gorgeous in habit and name,—  
"Painted Lady," *un peu coquette*,—  
For ever this honour you now may claim—  
Science to butterflies owes a great debt !

## THE RUBÁIYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYÁM.

DRINK as we may the Song is magic Wine :  
Yet at the Tavern Door what is the Sign ?  
    See, how he smiles who proffers us the Draught ;  
He leaves to us the Vintage and the Vine.

Ruby or amber do you wish to see ?  
Call the Cup either, that the Cup will be.  
    Is the Door open ? Enter, friend, and drink !  
The lock will turn if you possess the key.

## TO CHARLES KINGSLEY.

GREATER than many whom the world has hailed  
As greatest, thou by inner greatness failed  
To gain the height your footsteps might have scaled.

The narrower paths in which you bravely trod,  
With feet by purpose clean and active shod,  
Thou took'st as limits given thee by God.

Did not the heart within thee often burn  
From that strict chosen path aside to turn,  
The beckoning victories of the world to earn ?

And more : did Thought not long for ampler flight  
To regions where Thought passes Day and Night,  
And darkness swallows what we call the Light ?

To highest point thy vision seems to rise  
When facing those unworded mysteries  
To which our age turns blind or blinded eyes.

But the strong heart, by fiery pulses stirred,—  
The poet-promptings by thy spirit heard,—  
Were hushed for what was deemed the Higher Word.

Content and happy in thy discipline,—  
Disciple to the last,—in thee was seen  
A man ev'n greater than he might have been !

## TO ROBERT BROWNING.

AFTER RECITING "SAUL," "EVELYN HOPE," AND  
"ABT VOGLER."

GREAT poet, in whose secret mines we find the unseen  
gold,—  
Singer of things unspeakable, and hardly to be told,—  
Adept at "music" more than sound, and as the Ages  
old,—

O Mystic, silent to the world, but yet proclaiming clear,  
To those who know, the Word of one who holds the  
Inner Sphere,—  
Thy message is a magic one, and few who listen, hear !

'Tis not the Hebrew Shepherd, nor Abt Vogler speaks  
through thee,  
They are but Names to guard thyself, and veil that  
Mystery  
Which ever hides behind a veil and speaks in Harmony.

I think a sense of something great, a wonder and a light,  
Passes from out the very words even to those whose sight  
Takes not thy way, or taking it, notes not how high thy  
flight.

I know that some who listen hear. Their hearing would  
suffice,  
Were all the others deaf and mute : but in some hidden-  
wise  
A deep responsive echo seems from every heart to rise.

No voice so great as thine, so freed from rhapsody or  
moan,  
Has in this age of ours been raised, with world-compelling  
tone,  
To plead for Thought which by the world is little prized  
or known.

And we, who humbly and afar follow that Thought Divine,  
Do thank thee for the shining words through which you  
flash the sign  
To us. If as I speak those words the light through them  
may shine

On others,—nay, on one !—that light has on my spirit  
shone  
Not all in vain. Twofold my debt :—the gift were great,  
alone ;  
But in it I grow giver too ; speaking, I pass it on !

## A HARMONY.

ALL the world is full of music—  
So at least the wise folk say :  
There is music in the sunshine,  
Such as shines on us to-day :  
Rainbow-music in the storm-cloud :  
Flower-music in the ground :  
And the harmonies of colour  
Answering those of song and sound.

All, you see, is but Vibration,  
Given alike to eye and ear :  
Only, for a variation,  
This we see and that we hear.  
All's the same in different language  
Springing from one root above.  
*There* perhaps will find the secret  
Is not far from those who love.

All the world is full of music :  
Let me not my cadence miss.  
It is sealed within your spirit ;—  
Let me learn it in a kiss !  
Everywhere I hear it ringing :  
What is the refrain thereof ?  
Ah ! why ask ? Perhaps the secret  
Is not far from those who love.

O my love, the real true Music  
Just begins where this sound dies :  
On the other side of silence  
Are the spirit's harmonies.  
As the Alchemists have told us  
There is Fire beyond a doubt  
Burning in the inner Ether  
When the flame we see goes out.

Could we hear the Sound of all things  
We should find it wondrous true ;  
And amidst the whole world's chorus  
I should know which Note was You !  
Love, to those who know, is Music  
Born within the atmosphere  
Of that world of finer essence  
Which but few can see or hear.

How the sunshine in your hair, dear,—  
    (I am listening !)—softly sings !  
All the thoughts within your spirit  
    Vibrate true like golden strings.  
May no discords from my life, dear,  
    Those vibrations falsify !  
All such discords now you love me  
    Will resolve in harmony.

Do not heed them if they tell you,—  
    They, the over-wise, to-day,—  
That the world has grown weary  
    Of the Lover and his Lay.  
Love the root and flower of Life is,  
    And the world in which we move,  
Live and move and have our being,  
    Has no meaning—save for Love !

He who hears it, he who sees it,  
    Smiles at peace amid the strife,  
And its song will solve the riddle  
    Of the sphinx that men call Life.  
Hear it in the seas and rivers !  
    See it in the starlit sky !  
'Tis no poet's idle dreaming,—  
    'Tis the world's great Mystery !

Thus the world is full of music !  
From the air an Echo falls :  
Even in the ground beneath us,  
Something answers—something calls !  
All the world—say I ? Look higher !  
Heaven itself is made thereof.  
And we feel—we know—the secret  
Is not far from those who love.

## INITIATION.

THROUGH daily joy and daily pain  
One truth is clear discerned,—  
The lessons which this life can teach  
Must in this life be learned.

Here, or none other where at all  
Those lessons learned must be.  
Refused, they are a broken link  
In our eternity.

Consider :—we, and we alone,  
And only now and here,  
Can do that thing which comes to us  
In Duty plain and clear.

There's neither small, nor mean, nor low,  
To one who sees the Real :  
Perfection raises everything  
To its untired Ideal.

We long to know the Way : and yet  
The secret of the skies  
May lie in some rejected task  
To which we close our eyes.

For he who does the will shall know.  
What promise is more plain ?  
Yet this, of wisdom's many roads  
Will fewest followers gain.

Whatever comes to us to do,  
Though dark it seem to sight,  
Simply because it comes to us,  
*That* is our road to Light.

O ! lesson hardest to be learnt !  
Some great thing to be done  
Were easy, welcome. But this thing  
Is welcome unto none.

Yet once accepted it becomes  
The key of human Fate.  
Life's Mysteries unveil themselves :  
We are Initiate.

## A SON OF ORPHEUS.

"GOOD-NIGHT ! good-night ! The feast is done,  
I must be getting on my way.  
'Happy the bride the sun shines on !'  
And never brighter sunlight shone  
Than ours this happy bridal day !  
Another glass ? Well, then, just one.  
A parting bumper, as you say,—  
A brimming glass !—it is the last.  
Swiftly the smiling hours fly past  
When young feet trip it on the floor.  
What ! yet another dance ?—one more ?—  
My fiddle's tired . . . old !—I too !  
Well, look you—if I play for you,  
You will not grudge my fiddler's fee ?  
And what is that, you ask, maybe ?—  
What—and how much ?—Why, listen—this—  
A good, fair, honest, buxom kiss !  
You'll pay ?—Then for your dance ; here 'tis !"

He fiddled well, and well the feet  
The floor in tuneful measure beat.  
And fast and faster went the bow,  
And fast and faster, to and fro,  
The dancers danced : till when the flight  
Of foot and bow were at their height,  
And through the merry laughing rout  
The rhythm of the polka swung  
Like waves of wind the wheat among,  
The fiddler broke off with a shout.—

“ Good-night ! this time, good-night, indeed,  
In vain ye tempt, in vain ye plead.  
No ; not another bar I’ll play.  
Have ye not danced enough I say ?  
Toed it and heeled it all the night ?  
For shame ! you’re cruel. Nay is nay.  
I’ve far to go : and ere ’twas light  
This morning did I start from home.  
We’ve had a jolly day ! Now come !—  
Give me my fee.—Then one glass more,  
And see me safe outside the door.  
Charles, here’s my hand. God bless you, boy !  
Marie, good-night ! Health, wealth, and joy  
Be yours—and always—all thro’ life !  
Here’s luck to bridegroom and to wife ! ”

The farewell voices die away.  
The light that streamed with ruddy ray  
Out from the open cottage door,  
Fades down and dwindles more and more :  
And now it gleams, and now 'tis gone !  
The road turns sharply to the right,  
Up the hillside he trudges on  
As best he can.

'Tis dead of night.  
The clouds are scurrying o'er the sky,  
The wind with ghostly homeless sigh  
Wails in the trees : and hark ! hard by,  
The night-jar croaks with bodeful cry.  
Some snow fell on the hills last night.  
Above the woods of fir and pine,  
The great slopes, looming phantom-white,  
Across the midnight darkness shine.  
But naught of this the fiddler heeds ;  
Well-used to dark and lonesome ways,  
Onward with stumbling feet he speeds,  
And only thinks of all the day's  
Good fare and fun—and that sweet fee  
She gave—and gave so willingly !—  
And how uncommon pleased he'll be—  
(The road is rough just here and steep !)—

To be in bed and fast asleep.  
Meanwhile, come—courage ! step along !  
And cheer the darkness with a song.

For truth to tell we've had enough,  
Red wine and white, good generous stuff,  
Has freely flowed for every guest,  
And that last bottle was the best.  
A glorious day, the saints be praised !  
And if we feel a trifle dazed,  
Well, what of that ? The cool night air  
Revives us : and a merry heart  
Is good sometimes. We have our part  
Of trouble,—more than is our share !  
So let us troll our 'song to-night,  
Thankful for good wine, red and white,  
And neither blame ourselves nor it  
If we just trip a little bit,  
And here and there forget our song  
As in the dark we trudge along.  
Soon be at home and safe asleep !

Here are the cross roads. Shall we keep  
The highroad,—or that short cut try,  
And save a good two miles thereby ?  
A thousand feet or more below,

The village lies : and yonder, see !  
The first white little patch of snow.  
The road or short cut shall it be ?  
The wood perhaps is dark and black  
At night. Ah, bah ! We know each yard ;  
No fear of straying from the track.  
Safe, safe enough ! and not so hard  
As that long road. We'll try the wood.  
The moon will soon have risen. Good.  
So in we go.

Dark, dark and still,  
Among the tall black pines : so dark  
You scarce can see a tree until  
Your hand in passing scrapes the bark.  
Onward he trudges. Not a sound.  
He knows each turn and inch of ground.  
How silent 'tis in here ! And hark !  
What's that ? 'Twas some one following !  
No, no :—but he has ceased to sing.  
A sense of loneliness has put  
Its finger on his lip : his foot  
Is somehow spurred to hasten on. ,  
Look !—stop a minute,—something shone  
Out of the darkness yonder. There !  
It shone again—and now 'tis gone.

He turns to look behind, and sees  
What seem two eyes of greenish glare  
That watch him from between the trees—  
Two cruel spectral eyes that stare !  
His heart is nipped with sudden frost  
Of fear. Those eyes ! And see !—another pair !—  
Mon Dieu !—and there !—and there !—and there !  
Encircled by them everywhere !  
“ A pack of wolves ! I’m lost ! I’m lost ! ”

He looks at them with freezing breath :  
He knows they are the eyes of Death.  
His voice breaks up the silent air  
In shout on shout. Against a pine  
He sets his back. The void black night  
Is starred with those fierce eyes. They shine  
Like some accursed magic ring  
That now is slowly narrowing  
To hem its wretched victim in ;  
Till almost by their wicked light  
He seems to see the teeth that grin,  
The mouths that snarl with cruel fangs.  
He feels his life each moment hangs  
Over the edge of doom. But see—  
That pair of eyes is coming close,  
Closer and closer—and he knows

Horror will soon be pain. His lips  
Refuse the cry of agony  
The heart compels. He faints and slips  
Upon the smooth fir-needles,—grips  
A branch, and in the struggle twangs  
The fiddle slung behind his back.

And in a moment all the pack  
Of wolves start back, and listen—dazed,  
Arrested ! Like a flash there shoots  
Across the fiddler's brain a tale  
Once heard, of how these savage brutes  
Are tamed by music. Heaven be praised !  
The saints forbend the hope should fail !  
Swift as the thought, the violin  
Is clutched, the bow is poised : and thin  
And shrill, as if with frightened wail,  
The strings, with almost human cry,  
Croak out their challenge, and begin  
Their grim death-dance of agony.

Play, fiddler, play ! for life you play.  
Give them your best. No moment stay.  
Play, play, with quickening pulse and breath.  
That catgut is the leash of Death ;  
Once broke or slipped, 'tis at your throat !



A devil peers between each note,  
And at one pause, why, in he'll slip  
And have you writhing in his grip !  
Play, man, as never yet did man  
Since first the fiddling world began !  
A polka ! Dance, wolves, dance ! nor glare  
With those fierce eyes so still and grim.  
Horribly patient stand they there,  
All silently besieging him ;  
But for the moment kept at bay  
In some unknown mysterious way,  
By some uncomprehended link  
Such as no brain would dream or think  
Could be betwixt such alien things  
As hearts of wolves and fiddle-strings !

And yet is it not known to us  
The Thracian conquered Tartarus ?  
So great is music's magic spell  
It binds in one Heaven, Earth, and Hell.

But still the fiddler works amain.  
An hour ago the self-same strain  
Re-echoed through the dancing room  
And gained that sweet kiss for its fee :  
And now it almost seems to be

Played in a black and stifling tomb  
With grisly ghouls for company.  
A witches' sabbat were less mad !  
A Brocken revel never had  
More subtly fiendish mockery  
Of joy. A dance of Death it is !  
Agony's stiff paralysis  
Threatens his aching arms and hands :  
And yet as on hot iron he stands,  
And still he madly plies the strings,  
And works the bow and madlier sings,  
Shouting anon a cry of fear  
In the last hope that some, mayhap,  
Returning from the feast may hear.

Ah, God ! a string breaks with a snap !  
No time to fix another one !  
On, on : pray Heaven the others last !  
A twang—a cry ! Another's gone !  
Sense almost swoons—hope stands aghast.  
Nothing he sees but eyes—eyes—eyes !  
The world is but a vault of black  
Lit with those hungry lurid eyes,  
Resounding with despairing cries,  
Grotesque—insane—demoniac !



“ Help ! help ! I’m lost.” A twang, a crack !  
The third string gone : but one remains.  
The music dwindles, falters, wanes :—  
Yet on its weak and trembling strains  
A man’s life hangs. A slender cord  
For such a weight ! A child’s toy-sword  
Against an armed and murderous horde !  
The brutes begin to feel the reins  
Are growing slack. They edge more near  
With more of hunger, less of fear.  
The end is surely come at last.  
The poor scraped notes diminish fast,  
Although he works with might and main.  
Not long will he have power to sway  
The devil in the wolfish brain,  
Or keep the savage beasts at bay.  
And lo ! as if to make the doom  
More hideous still, the Stygian gloom  
Is lifted. Suddenly a glare  
Of moonlight makes the whole place bright,  
And with its weird and cruel light  
The horror of the scene lays bare.

It is too much ! It is too much !  
Ah ! neither tortured string nor heart

Can any longer bear their part :  
They snap beneath this final touch.  
Both in that awful moment fail,  
And sense goes out in one sharp wail—  
One last despairing cry for help !  
But lo ! as all the savage pack  
Bark out the signal for attack,  
A shot is heard :—a whip's sharp crack !—  
Jangle of sledge-bells on the snow !  
And bang, bang, bang, the rifles go !  
Two brutes fall dead with snarl and yelp ;  
The rest, like cowards, all turn tail  
And skurrying off in wild affright,  
Vanish as spectres in the night.

Prone on the earth the fiddler lies,  
Nor knows the struggle's happy end ;  
Nor hears the loud advancing cries,—  
“ Courage ! We're near ! Where are you, friend ? ”

Some of his neighbours going home  
Just in the nick of time had come.  
Their guns took up the conquering tale  
Where music had begun to fail,  
And made the fittest coda, sure,  
To such a demon overture.



The fiddler, snatched in truth from death,—  
The veriest jaws of death,—they bore  
Rejoicing to his cottage door,  
Shouting a loud triumphant tune,  
And left him safe and sound beneath  
His own roof.

Late next afternoon

The curé, having heard somewhat  
About the story ; (such a boon  
To village gossips happens not  
Too often !)—takes his way to hear  
From out the man's own mouth the true  
Account. And as he's drawing near,  
He thinks he spies a something new  
Above the little carven shrine  
Wherein, holding the Child Divine,  
An image of Our Lady stands  
Blessing the threshold with her hands.  
A lamp hangs down before the niche,  
Always alight ; to tend to which  
Is every day the fiddler's care.  
All this the curé knows : but there,—  
What's that ?—above, against the wall :—  
Some relic or memorial,

Symbol of gratitude or prayer,  
To pious memory dedicate ?  
The old man puts his glasses on  
To look. His spectacles are dim.  
Or his eyesight failing him ?  
He wipes his eyes at any rate,  
Whilst, with some text appropriate,  
He murmurs out a benison.  
For a strong nail is hammered in  
Above the shrine : and from it, lo !  
Hangs the poor stringless violin,  
And under it the broken bow.

## THE SIGNATURE.

Nor with the passing name I bear  
By chrism and by heritage  
Sign I myself, whilst years endure,  
To you, O Friend, in friendship sure ;  
But with a greater signature  
Than pen can write upon this page.

I write it in the spirit-light,  
And with that Name, unspoken, real,  
Which not in this life will be shown ;  
That New Name which shall be my own,—  
The Name by which the soul is known,  
And only Spirit can reveal :—

The Name I hear and answer to  
When life has risen to its Best ;  
The Name that Music tells me of ;

Which lives in Silence, Light, and Love ;  
The Name to which my life doth move  
And till it find it, knows no rest.

The name by which I move in life  
Is but a passing badge to me,  
A badge to hold and honour well ;  
The many memories it can tell  
Of lives well-lived stand sentinel  
And challenge me to keep it free.

But for the Man within the man  
There is another Name, be sure.  
Its script we may not yet divine :  
But 'tis with that Name I would sign  
My real self in friendship thine.  
Take that eternal signature.

## VITA MYSTICA.

### I. *Elixir Vitæ.*

CALM thou the waters of thy soul,  
Unruffled let them lie,  
Till, crystal-clear, they may reflect  
The overarching sky.

Let Fear be stilled : and all thy thought  
Unto that point be set  
That does not hasten on toward Hope,  
Nor linger to regret.

Calm thou thy soul, till o'er its face,  
As o'er primeval seas,  
The spirit moves, and Life takes form  
At the Divine decrees.

Forget the things that are behind ;  
    Water defiled may gain  
Its purity, without an atom lost,  
    It does but lose its stain.

In confidence possess thy soul,  
    In Patience, Calmness, Love,  
Till, crystal-clear, its waters lie,  
    Calm as the skies above.

So will they the Elixir bright  
    Of Life most truly be :  
The magic draught which dowers us  
    With Immortality.

For sweetened by eternal springs,  
    And purified by Pain,  
They are the Cup whereof who drinks  
    Shall never thirst again.

*2. Transmutation.*

IN Flesh Immortal Life begins ;  
    Heaven lies within, 'tis writ :  
The Body may a temple be  
    If God transfigure it.

There may arise a Bethlehem  
    Within thy soul to-day ;  
And in the "Manger" of thy Life  
    Thou must the Christ-Child lay.

Not in the palace, or the Inn,  
    But in the oxen's stall :  
'Twas there the Wise Men found the Birth  
    Of Life Celestial.

3. *Magic.*

THE mystery of Growth who knows ?  
    A silent, unseen Force,  
Apart from thee it works its will,  
    And takes its unseen Course.

The seed becomes a plant, the plant  
    Bursts into bud and flower ;  
By alchemy of earth and air  
    And nurture of the shower.

But whence the substance of the plant ?  
    How did it upward grow ?  
Not from the seed,—not from the mould.  
    The mystery none may know.

Take note the lilies of the field,  
They neither toil nor spin ;  
Plant thou the seed within the soul,  
And lo ! the Flower within !

4. *Prima Materia.*

THE element of Human Will  
Is not yet wholly known,  
Although its right of miracle  
Has oft been taught and shown.

In Thought we hold the motive power  
That made the universe :  
Its triumph—Truth—could make us free,  
Its slavery is our curse.

Miracles are but sovereign Thought ;  
Latent, they lie in us.  
In other truth, we see there's naught  
That is miraculous.

If we could only realise  
The Best our Thought can give,  
That Thought alone would limit then  
The Life we might receive.

5. *The Philosopher's Stone.*

TRUTH must be true in every plane.  
The Magian only wrought  
In baser substance what his soul  
Discerned in worlds of Thought.

Surely the alchemy of old  
Was an attempted sign  
To show, in Matter, truths the soul  
Worked out in things divine.

The New Name graven on the Stone,—  
The mystic Stone of white—  
These are but symbols :—finite things  
Ciphering the Infinite.

The search to find the Stone is hard :  
Strait road and narrow gate.  
The world cares not to walk therein :—  
The Life Regenerate.

The road is free to every one,  
Yet heavy is the toll ;  
By many names the road is called,  
By many names the goal.

But each and all have meant the same  
Since first the world began :—  
The Life that lives within the life,  
The Man within the man.

And he who once perceives this quest  
Nor life nor death will stay :  
But Few, of even chosen ones,  
There be who find the way.

Many, how many, lose the clue !  
Many, how many, fall !  
And some lose heart, and some lose life,  
And scorn is given to all.

Yet he who follows out the quest  
His life transmuted is :  
Through all its Seven Spheres he feels  
Celestial genesis.

The Cross becomes the Tree of Life,  
The Crown of Thorns the Wreath ;  
He spells the Words of Power that takes  
All Victory from Death.

His is the Inward Man that speaks  
 As one who sees and KNOWS :  
 The Interlaced Triangles his,  
 The Flaming Star and Rose.

He passes Earth's penumbral shade,  
 He conquers all eclipse :  
 His is the Stone of White the Seer  
 Saw in Apocalypse.

It squares the circle in its lines :  
 Numbers are fused in One :  
 Its sphere contains the Universe ;  
 Its light outshines the Sun.

6. *The Seal of Solomon.*

THE Seer that in the desert slept  
 Beheld the angels fair  
 Ascending and descending still  
 Upon the Golden Stair.

The lines descending to the Stone,—  
 To us the Beth-el true !—  
 Became in turn ascending lines  
 To meet Descent anew.

Behold the mystic symbol here,  
Graved on the opal stone :  
The two Triangles Interlaced,—  
The Seal of Solomon.

And one descends and one ascends ;  
They cross in every line :  
And as a star shall shine the Soul  
Whose Life has wrought the Sign.

*7. The Word of Power.*

" GIVE us a Sign !" the people cried.  
The Master stayed his hand.  
No sign was given, save one they knew  
And would not understand.

Whate'er might soothe the suffering  
Was never put aside :  
But for the sign of Magic Power  
It always was denied.

Though from the Grave one rose and spake,  
Him would not earth believe.  
For he who hears not silence speak  
Cannot the Word receive.

## THE REED-PIPE.

THE reed's a perfect instrument,  
But hard to learn, they say :  
A thought too much of pitch—and lo !  
The sound flies off, away !

The note at once the octave leaps,  
And straight to silence goes :  
The sound has gone—clean gone—but where ?  
Ah ! where indeed ?—who knows ?

See !—if vibrations grow too swift  
They pass to—the Beyond.  
To ope that door to Eye and Ear  
Who has the magic wand ?

I would be as a reed to Love,  
But am not tuned aright ;  
Too rapid the vibrations are,  
The notes have taken flight !

## THE REED-PIPE.

I meant to pipe a song for you,  
But vain is such an aim :  
My love has leapt to silence, dear,  
At touch of your sweet Name.

But you have that enchanted rod  
The unseen gates to move :  
To you will silence yield the song,  
And vocalise my love.

## AURORE.

AN OCTAVE OF SONG.

### *First Morning.*

THE new-waked spirit sometimes sighs  
For Life Eternal in the skies :  
Straightway this bright thought crowns the brow,—  
“Eternity is always Now.”

### *Second Morning.*

Find me the sun above these clouds,  
O, heart of mine !  
Or take the clouds themselves as proof  
The sun doth shine.

The loveliest Sign the sunshine gives  
To mortal eyes,  
Is wrought by it in falling rain  
On cloudy skies.

How say, "the sun shines not to-day,"  
Whilst day is day ?  
The daylight is but sunlight veiled  
In clouds of grey.

Live on the rays that filter through :  
For every one  
That falls on thee, it came for thee  
Straight from the sun.

In shade or sunshine be content,  
O, heart ! and know  
Earth's atmosphere which makes the cloud  
Makes Light also.

*Third Morning.*

Awake !  
The light of day I never yet have seen !  
Forth from its slumber let my Being break !  
I know, I feel, I never yet have been  
Body and soul awake.

The sleep of Adam is not yet forgot.  
There is a sleepless life in us that fain  
Would take us to the Life that slumbers not,  
Never to sleep again.

*Fourth Morning.*

What is the bugle-call to-day  
That doth to us "Reveille" say ?

Is it some great thing to be done ?  
Some work fulfilled ? some joy forgone ?

Or is it that life comes to us  
With no task made solicitous :

But with an open sheet addressed  
For us to write what seems us best ?

That were indeed the harder task  
For watchful life from us to ask.

But we accept the challenge bright,  
On a clear page our Day to write.

The morning bugle-call that rings  
To us the thought of upward things

May ring at sundown on a Day  
That has harked forward on the way.

*Fifth Morning.*

What are the "debts"—O God—the which  
Forgiven we ask to be ?  
The touch of Thee that lives in us—  
That is our Debt to Thee.

The debtor's count grows day by day  
In all we hear and see :  
All that is meant by that word—"life"—  
This is our Debt to Thee.

The Birthright given in the Christ,  
Of which we hold the key :  
The Mystery of the Sons of God—  
These are our "Debts" to Thee.

*Sixth Morning.*

In the dim land of Sleep  
Where did I go last night ?  
Memory is there none  
Of what was said and done :—  
All has taken flight !

In that dark world of Dreams  
We are but wanderers—lost !  
Born in a world unknown :—  
Sailing out,—alone,—  
Drifting,—or tempest-tossed !

Ah ! in the world of Death,  
What for the wandering soul ?  
Falling asleep, as 'twere,  
Drifts it to some Dream-sphere  
Where it has no control ?

If our own Thought-world makes  
That unto which we go,  
Why does it claim us not  
When sleep has freed our Thought ?  
What is Dream's phantom-show ?

Well : we arise from sleep—  
The dreams, they pass away !  
Sleep, none the less, makes us strong,  
We greet the Light with a song,  
And we face the coming day.

See ! how bright is the Morn !  
Draw in its life-giving breath !  
Bright may that Morning be,—  
God !—when we wake to Thee,  
After the Dreams of Death !

*Seventh Morning.*

The earth to me is not the same it was  
In childhood's days of "splendour in the grass."

The sunset has a different tale to tell  
To that in youth I loved to hear so well.

The Dawn no more the message gives it had  
In wondrous summers when I was a lad.

Ah ! how the magic boyish memories come  
And look at me—and pass : for they are dumb !

Far-off—in more than years, with changes rife,—  
I view them as they were another life !

Even as I—who knows ?—may view some day,  
The hundred lives that led me on my way !

But no regret I feel,—no sense of pain,—  
No sighs for days that cannot come again.

Those sighs are past : I sighed them once, in truth ;  
I sang my echo-song of Vanished Youth !

But Sunrise came !—a sun not seen before !  
And Earth grows young for ever in That Aurore !

*Eighth Morning.*

There's nothing great and nothing small ;  
God is alike in each and all :  
All things are lofty to the eye  
That sees in all, Reality.

God's Kingdom is on earth begun :  
Time and Eternity are one :  
And Heaven is not some distant sphere :  
It lies about us Now and Here.

## VERSES

WRITTEN FOR AN ADAPTATION OF DICKENS'S  
"CHRISTMAS CAROL."

I.—*Chorus of Spirits.*

I.

AH ! will it last for ever,  
The struggle and endeavour ?

Who will set thee free ?  
The wail of wasted life,  
Goal of a barren strife—

These things wait for thee !  
Shadow and Illusion,  
Phantom and Confusion,

All you love may be.  
Flesh doth the soul conceal ;  
Only That is Real

Which you cannot see.

II.

Life turns to decay,  
 All things pass away ;—  
 Where is Reality ?  
 Listen ! look ! 'Tis near.  
 He with ears shall hear,—  
 He, and only he !  
 Not in sight or sound,  
 Not in things around  
 Mortals find the key.  
 Flesh doth the soul conceal :  
 Only that is Real  
 Which you cannot see.

2.—*A Christmas Song.*

I.

MANY our pleasures and many our pains,  
 Worries enough and to spare !  
 Days there are in each month when it rains,  
 Days, when the skies are fair ;  
 But very good things,—very, very good things—  
 Oh, no ! they don't often appear !  
 Holidays many the round year brings,  
 But Christmas comes once a year.

So—

Songs we'll sing to it,  
Bells we'll ring to it,  
Joy we'll bring to it—  
Once a year !

II.

Perhaps when winds are bitter-black,  
And the ground is hard as a brick,  
When water-pipes burst, and glasses crack,  
And coals burn all too quick,  
When bills a many there are to pay,  
And nothing to pay them—O, dear !  
We are almost sorry that Christmas Day  
Should come even once a year !

Ah !—

Yea or nay for it,  
Say what you may for it,  
Oh ! we pay for it—  
Once a year !

III.

But ah ! what matter the worry and chill  
When we clasp the hands we love ?  
We take the good and we take the ill,  
Press forward, and look above.

For hearts grow warm when earth doth freeze,  
 And stars i' the dark shine clear :  
 So let us be glad—(all together, please !)—  
 That Christmas comes once a year.

Ay !—

Comes with light for us,  
 Makes life bright for us,  
 Puts things right for us—  
 Once a year !

3.—*A Carol.*

CHRISTMAS carols !—Christmas carols !—  
 Still we sing them year by year ;  
 Still the holy Christmas message,  
 “ Peace on earth,” the nations hear.  
 But we wait—in vain !—expectant  
 Of that Advent in the skies ;  
 For its kingdom is within us,  
 And 'tis *there* that sun must rise.  
 Christmas Day—the wondrous Birthday  
 Of the soul's celestial Breath—  
 Whilst it gives new life to this life  
 Gives nativity to Death.

If its Truth were born within us  
Life were Immortality,  
And a song too great for singing  
Would our Christmas carol be !

Not alone when snows are falling  
Do the herald angels sing :  
They are with us in the May-time  
If our hearts are listening.  
Summer, Winter, Seed-time, Harvest,  
All alike are Christmas-time  
Unto him who hears the Tidings  
In each passing hour and chime.  
Look above, and look within you,  
Seek and find your Bethlehem :  
For the Star the Wise Men followed  
Shines for us as erst for them.  
Every breath becomes a carol,  
Every star-beam points the way,  
And the message of the Christmas  
Lives for all in every day !

## LINES

WRITTEN AFTER READING A POEM BY THOMAS BAILEY  
ALDRICH CALLED "VOICES AND VISIONS"—REGRET-  
TING THE LOSS OF THE FAIRYLAND OF YOUTH.

"In youth, beside the summer sea,  
Voices and visions came to me.

Now one by one the visions fly,  
Now one by one the voices die," &c., &c.

STILL in the common daily round  
The visions shine, the voices sound.

Ah ! do not ever from me flee ;  
Still to the end companion me.

Eyesight may dim and hearing fail,  
Our Life may try to weave a veil

Between me and that shining sphere  
That shone upon me once so clear,

But let me all these things defy  
To dull the Spirit's ear and eye.

For Age—what is it ? Time is naught  
To him who holds the world of thought.

Away then, plaints of vain regret,  
For youth gone by, and suns now set !

Away with fears that days may dawn  
When those fair visions are withdrawn !

Those whom the gods love—so 'tis sung—  
Always (I read it thus) die young !

Their youth, that is, lasts all their day :  
Childhood for them fades not away ;

It only sinks within—apart—  
To live for ever in the Heart.

Ah ! let me never lose the gleam  
Of that true world men call a Dream !

Mine be the blame if sense grow gross,  
If those fair visions suffer loss.

Let the loud world go on amain,  
Toiling at what it counts as gain,

Laugh with a pitying smile at what  
It seeth and it heareth not,

Gibe at the Truth it dubs "Ideal,"  
And clutch Illusions it calls "Real" ;

But let the world be still to me  
The same it was in Infancy !

The same—and better ! Fairyland  
Brought living to my very hand,

And "heaven"—once far beyond the sky—  
Part of to-day's reality !

So, whilst the round years onward roll,  
Till Death itself unloose the soul—

Ay,—seeing as I now do see—  
For ever, mine may this prayer be—  
"Voices and Visions, come to me !"

## SUNSHINE.

As the flowers, though earth-rooted,  
Take their colour from the sun :  
So my life takes form and colour,  
All from thee, my dearest one.

In the rose and in the lily,  
In the violet, there lies  
Beauty that is born in heaven,  
Light drawn down from summer skies.

Thus the heart of every flower  
Holds a sun-shaft, deep concealed :  
But it throbs through all its being,  
And in colour is revealed.

If my life gain any honour,  
Give the honour where 'tis due :  
For I hold you in my heart, dear,—  
And the light comes shining through.

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